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1918: “Zero” German Armed Intervention of the Russian Don

Abstract

The internal situation in the Don region in 1918, during the intervention of armed units of the Austrian and German armies, has been overshadowed in the scholarship by two key phenomena: fates of the Volunteer Movement and formation of the quasi-state, All-Great Don Host. It is important to reconstruct the events that took place in the Don towns and villages in

May–November 1918. Historical sources are scattered throughout archives and libraries. The author has used fonds of the State Archive of the Russian Federation, the State Archive of the Rostov Region, and the Center for Documentation on the Contemporary History of the Rostov Region. Austrian and German units that appeared on the borders of the Don region in early May 1918 engaged in combat only with the Red Army detachments. Cossacks and foreign troops fought together from the very beginning. In future, the German administration strove to organize uninterrupted supplies of industrial raw materials and products, food and fodder from the Don territory. In order to do this, the Germans occupied key control points and transport communications in the Western part of the region. A double government was introduced in the villages: alongside atamans there appeared German commandants. Re-election of Ataman P. N. Krasnov in August 1918 was ensured by the Germans; his most influential opponents were neutralized; censorship for the press was introduced. The Germans held a neutral position towards Russian officers and the Volunteer Army. The experience of intervention in the South of Russia influenced the fate of Germany, as German soldiers received a practical lesson in revolutionary action. Presence of the Central Powers' troops in Russia forced the Entente countries to intervene more actively in the affairs of their former ally. Germany assumed that successful results of the armistice on the Eastern Front could be replicated on the Western Front.

### Keywords

Historical sources, 1918 in Russia, Don region, German and Austrian armies on the Don, Don government, intervention regime of the armies of the Central Powers (Quadruple Alliance).

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